

CITY SCHOOLYARD GARDEN

HARVEST *of the* MONTH

Seasonal snacks from garden to classroom

MIXED LETTUCE

— March, 2016 —



Harvest of the Month is a great way for youth and their families to explore, taste and learn about seasonal vegetables and fruits - from the garden, in the classroom, on the plate.

FACTS & VARIETIES

Lettuce comes in all shapes and colors, sometimes with green, golden, purple, bluish, reddish and multicolored leaves. Lettuce is in the aster family, along with dandelions and sunflowers: one of the biggest plant families on the planet! Lettuce's scientific name, *lactuca sativa*, comes from the way that the stem oozes a white liquid like milk when it breaks.

Ancient Egyptians were cultivating lettuce 6,000 years ago. 23 million metric tons of lettuce are eaten each year by people all over the world!

HEALTH & NUTRITION

Lettuce is a good source of:

Vitamin A & C
Potassium
Fiber
Calcium
Iron & Copper

Lettuce is full of fiber and good for your digestive system. Lettuce also helps you get rid of possibly harmful salts, which improves heart health. It includes Vitamin C, which helps lower/prevent the oxidation of cholesterol. And, surprisingly, lettuce is 20% protein.

COOKING & EATING

While lettuce is most often used in salads or on a sandwich, you can also use bigger lettuce leaves as a wrap or boat to hold chicken salad or rice and beans.

SALAD WITH APPLES & SUNFLOWER SEEDS

4 large handfuls of washed, mixed lettuce
1 large apple, diced
1/4 cup hulled sunflower seeds
a little oil and vinegar

Mix it all together and enjoy! To add a little protein, you could add a sliced hard-boiled egg or some cheese.

Illustration: Mackenzie Baumgarten, 8th grade at Buford Middle School

GROWING TIPS

Lettuce likes cool weather best, so it grows well in spring and fall. Start seeds inside 4 weeks before the last frost, and transplant in mid to late spring. Lettuce likes loose, cool soil that drains well and will be tastiest if you add some compost before transplanting. Lettuce grows best in full sun, but if it's the hot part of summer, a little shade will cool them down. For big heads of lettuce, you can space them each one foot apart, then you harvest the whole head at once. Or you can plant them closer and pick leaves as they grow.

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Design: rock paper scissors

Harvest of the Month is a program that highlights a locally available crop each month by providing a fresh, healthy snack in all six Charlottesville Elementary Schools. Students also learn about the crop in their schoolyard garden and classroom. Information on crop growing, nutrition and preparation is shared with teachers and families. The goal of Harvest of the Month is to support healthy living skills that strengthen our youth and community.



City Schoolyard Garden is an independent non-profit organization that cultivates academic achievement, health, environmental stewardship and community engagement through garden-based, experiential learning.